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Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918

May 1992

Vale District Planning Update for the Malheur Resource Area

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As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

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100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918

May 1992

Planning Update

Introduction -

This mailer is part of an effort by the Vale District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and three other eastern Oregon BLM districts, for an enhanced public notification and involvement program. This mailer is designed to help you understand proposals and decisions involving the BLM. Public involvement and input is important in the decisionmaking process of BLM's ongoing land use planning and implementation.

This report in general summarizes progress toward implementation of the Northern Malheur Management Framework Plan (MFP), Southern Malheur Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) issued in January 1984, and the Ironside RPS issued in March 1981. Similar progress reports and RPS updates were issued in December 1986, and September of 1989 and 1991. This document lists all accomplishments completed in the Malheur Resource Area during fiscal year 1991 (10/1/90 to 9/30/91) and actions anticipated for fiscal year 1992 (10/1/91 to 9/30/92).

This summary is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of all activities completed, but rather a brief status report.`

What You Can Find In This Document

Mailers like this one will be developed annually. While a flexible format will be maintained for the mailer, major sections similar to those described below will be included in each edition.

Feature Report: Reports in this section highlight topics of concern or high public interest within the Malheur Resource Area and may include major accomplishments completed the previous year or upcoming events. Featured in this edition is a report on the Oregon Trail in Malheur County.
Summary of Work: This section identifies accomplishments of the resource area in FY 1991, and also the FY 1992 emphasis areas, by each major resource program. The purpose of this section is to describe the work completed the previous year and list those areas of focus for the upcoming year.
Environmental Assessment Register: Listed in this section are those environmental assessments (EAs) scheduled for completion in FY 1992 or beyond. This section is included to facilitate public participation in the impact analysis of proposed on-the-ground actions.
Vale District Mailing List: This section is essential to maintain an accurate mailing list of interested individuals, groups and organizations. The Vale BLM District addresses a complexity of issues in its management which necessitate public notification and involvement in the decisionmaking process. Another purpose of this section is to facilitate you in notifying BLM of those issues/topics which interest you.

This mailer should bring you up-to-date concerning implementation of BLM's land use plans in the Malheur Resource Area. Any comments regarding format or content of the mailer to improve future issues would be appreciated. Suggestions should be sent to the Bureau of Land Management, Malheur Resource Area Manager, 100 Oregon Street, Vale, OR 97918.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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VALE DISTRICT

GENERAL LOCATION MAP

- BLM State Office
- BLM District Office
- BLM Area Office
- District Boundary
- Resource Area Boundary

VALE DISTRICT OFFICE

Government Printing Office regulations require BLM to periodically verify the accuracy and need for mailing lists. We want to reduce mailing address errors and only keep those individuals and groups on our lists that are actively interested in the Vale District's resource programs and issues.

Address Verification

To maintain the accuracy of the mailing list, please print you name and address (legibly) including zip code in the space provided below. This information will be compared to existing information in the District's mailing list which will be corrected, if necessary.

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Return To:

Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918

Resource Programs/Issues

The following categories currently exist on the District's mailing list. Please circle resource programs or issues which you would like to receive information. Should you receive other "Yearly Update" document from the Vale District, it is necessary to send only <u>one</u> mailing list insert.

Cultural - Native American Coordination
Cultural - Oregon Trail
Cultural - General

Environ. Analysis - EA Register (refer to the EA Register section of this document.

Fire - General
Fire - Fire Suppression

Forestry - General
Forestry - Timber Sales

Minerals - 3802 Plan of Operation
Minerals - 3809 Plan of Operation
Minerals - Grassy Mtn. Project*

Noxious Weeds - General

Planning - Resource Management Plans
Planning - Baker Yearly RMP Updates
Planning - Jordan Yearly MFP Updates
Planning - Malheur Yearly MFP Updates

Procurement - Contracting
Procurement - Small Lot Sales

Range Management - General

Recreation - General
Recreation - Off Road Vehicles
Recreation - Backcountry Byways

Special Manag. Areas - Research Natural Areas, Areas of Environmental Concern
Outstanding Natural Areas

Water Quality - General

Wilderness - General

Wild Horse - General

Wildlife - General

Wild/Scenic River - Grand Ronde River
Wild/Scenic River - Owhyee River
Wild/Scenic River - Powder River
Wild/Scenic River - Wallowa Study River
Wild/Scenic River - N. Fork Malheur River

FEATURE REPORT—

Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial

The sesquicentennial (150th) celebration of the Oregon Trail will be held in 1993 and the Vale District is preparing commemorative activities. A portion of the Oregon Trail passes through the Malheur and Baker Resource Areas of the Vale District.

While many readers may be aware of the exciting National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center developments at Flagstaff Hill near Baker City, this is not the only place in the Vale District where the public may experience the Oregon Trail. Plans are underway to develop three new interpretive sites and to improve existing interpretation at Keeney Pass. Also, the route of the Oregon Trail across public land in the Vale District has been marked with easily identifiable signs.

The Oregon Trail, a principal travel corridor for America's westward migration and expansion during the 19th century, was the most famous western trail used by explorers, fur traders, missionaries, emigrants, and gold seekers.

Last year, as part of the Adventures in the Past and Recreation 2000 programs, improvements were made in the Oregon Trail National Register District at Keeney Pass. The protective enclosure around this interpretive site was enlarged and asphalt walkways were constructed to improve access to the site. In addition, an interpretive hiking path and overlook were constructed. This hiking path gives visitors an opportunity to experience what it was like being one of the Oregon Trail emigrants. From the overlook, there is an excellent view of the well-defined Oregon Trail ruts at Keeney Pass, and it is possible to view a day's journey along the Trail from the Fort Boise crossing of the Snake River to the hot springs at the Malheur River. This project was accomplished in cooperation with Malheur County, the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, and several volunteer groups.

This year there will be further improvements at Keeney Pass. A native revegetation plan has been developed. Replanting of the area with native shrubs, flowering forbs, and grasses will enhance the historic setting of the Trail and stabilize areas of erosion. Community volunteers are working with BLM to ensure the success of this project. Plans are also underway to install a new interpretive panel at the overlook and to replace the seven existing panels with updated information.

The three interpretive sites proposed for development along the National Historic Oregon Trail include two in the Malheur Resource Area, one at Alkali Spring and another near Birch Creek. The third is proposed for Echo Meadows in the Baker Resource Area. New development includes an interpretive panel at Alkali Spring, which was a nooning spot—a place to stop at midday for rest or food—for many Oregon Trail emigrants. The journey to Alkali Spring will appeal to Trail buffs who enjoy following the historic route along rough, dusty roads for an experience more like that of the pioneers than travelling our modern paved roads.

The interpretive site planned for construction near Birch Creek is not far from the Oregon Trail interpretive kiosk at Farewell Bend State Park. The new developments here will allow visitors an opportunity to enjoy their heritage by viewing ruts created by the Oregon Trail emigration. Development of an interpretive panel and a vehicle parking area at this site will begin in 1992.

Summary of Work

This summary is organized into the following 11 areas of accomplishment/focus:

Range Management
Hazardous Materials
Fish/Wildlife/Botany
Lands & Rights-of-Way
Minerals
Cultural Resources
Wilderness
Recreation
Noxious Weed Control
Fire Management
Wild Horse Management

Range Management Program

1991 Accomplishments

This rangeland program summary (RPS) is the fourth in a series to provide information on that portion of the Malheur Resource Area located in the Ironside and Southern Malheur EIS areas.

Vegetation monitoring was completed on 54 allotments within the Malheur Resource Area. The 54 allotments consisted of 21 "I" (Improve), 32 "M" (Maintain) and 1 "C" (Custodial) category allotments. (These three classifications are determined by the allotment's condition or potential for resource conflict.) An active use supervision program resulted in numerous visits to all "I" and "M" allotments.

Seven allotments were evaluated during 1991, and some of those findings are listed below. Carrying capacity of the seven allotments was determined through collection and analysis of actual use, utilization, and climate data. Trend studies were used to determine if land use plan objectives were being met and whether grazing preference changes were warranted. The evaluation process will continue as scheduled on the remaining "I" and "M" allotments. Allotments in the "I" category are evaluated every five years, and the "M" category every ten years, unless problems dictate a change in schedule.

Alkali Springs Allotment showed a reduction in grazing preference. A 367 AUM voluntary reduction is being taken for the next three years. A grazing system was initiated that gave each native pasture two out of three years rest in the critical growing season (May-June). Also, some late spring use was changed to winter use. The reduction, winter use, and grazing system will be evaluated in three years.

Willow Basin Allotment showed additional forage above current preference, but no increase was given because trend studies were not supportive. Cottonwood seeding will be rested for two years. Bully Creek and North Fork riparian pastures will be rested one year out of three, and used early spring and late fall the other two years. Other native pastures will only be used during the critical growing season (May-June) one out of three years. The above grazing treatment has been initiated in a revised Allotment Management Plan.

Thorn Flat Allotment evaluation showed upward trends and no serious range management problems. The current grazing system will be continued.

Allotment No. 4 evaluation did not support active preference conversion of the 500 AUMs of temporary non-renewable use granted in the 1985 allotment evaluation. The evaluation further indicated a need for reconstruction of the livestock exclosure at South Cottonwood Reservoir according to a design that will protect valuable riparian communities and existing fisheries. The AMP should be revised to implement a grazing system which is consistent to pasture management objectives.

The Quartz Mountain Allotment evaluation showed land management objectives were being met within all pastures and also for the riparian area along the Owyhee River. An allotment management plan (AMP) should be developed which includes state land within these allotments.

The Beulah Allotment evaluation showed additional forage above current preference but no increase was given, because vegetative trend studies did not support the increase. Objec-

tives are being met in pastures that have "winter browse improvement" as an objective. Riparian areas in the upper and lower Calf Creek pastures are in an upward trend and are improving. Negotiations underway with the permittees limit livestock use on the North Fork of the Malheur River, which is Congressionally designated for study to determine its eligibility for inclusion in the National Wild River System .

The South Star Mountain Allotment evaluation showed the current preference close to the carrying capacity. Riparian objectives in canyon pasture are being met. A grazing system that encourages riparian improvement and maintenance of upland conditions needs to be developed. Chapman Reservoir was dropped from riparian exclosure construction due to low riparian site potential.

The 1991 Rangeland Improvement Program consisted of nine miles of riparian fence, construction of one new reservoir, and reconstruction of 500 feet of pipeline in various allotments throughout the resource area.

1992 Plans

The 54 allotments will continue to be monitored with study emphasis on actual use, utilization and trend. In riparian areas, there will be high priority for monitoring studies and use supervision, as well as special emphasis to ensure that grazing schedules are followed which allow riparian areas to improve.

The following nine allotments will be evaluated early in 1992: Black Butte (0304), Board Corrals (0507), Brogan Canyon (0148), Gordon Gulch (0513), Harper Basin (0301), Lava Ridge (0223), Rockville (0508), South Alkali (0100), and Willow Creek (0105).

Hazardous Materials Program

1991 Accomplishments

Cleanup efforts and monitoring continued throughout the year on the fuel oil release that occurred in 1990 from an underground storage tank at the Vale BLM District's warehouse. Further information concerning this oil release, its cleanup, and monitoring activities is available at the Vale BLM District Office.

Other 1991 accomplishments included inventory and cleanup relating to six midnight dumping incidents within the Malheur Resource Area.

Information on three closed dump sites (Vale, Slides, and Lytle Boulevard) within the Malheur Resource Area was compiled subject to a request by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These sites have also been included in a pilot project for evaluating potential hazards. The project, contracted through the Denver Service Center, is scheduled to be complete in 1992. Data compiled through this project will further assist the EPA in ranking the three dump sites under the EPA's latest guidelines, the Hazard Ranking System II.

1992 Plans

Future plans are to increase overview and coordination with the DEQ on mining activities in the Malheur Resource Area.

There will be an active plan to respond to unauthorized or "midnight" dumpings and hazardous material incidents that may occur. Coordination with other programs will necessitate the development of methodologies and strategies for identifying potential hazardous materials sites/situations. However, until such development occurs and further guidance is received from the Washington Office, no inventories will be conducted.

Fish/Wildlife/Botany Program

1991 Accomplishments

Emphasis continued to be placed on monitoring key wildlife habitats in grazing allotments scheduled for evaluations during the winter of 1991-1992.

Color infrared imagery was gathered by aircraft on low level flights over approximately 25 miles of streams that had riparian management objectives identified in the land use plan. About 150 miles of infrared imagery has been collected in the Resource Area to date.

Redband trout were collected from several streams and sent to Oregon State University for a laboratory analysis to determine genetic purity. This sampling represents one more effort in a multi-year commitment to determine where native trout are still present as pure strain varieties and where hybridization with hatchery stocks has taken place.

Initial breeding season inventories for non-game birds were conducted within the Leslie Gulch and Lower Owyhee Watchable Wildlife areas. Special status species monitoring was completed on 9,000 acres of long-billed curlew habitat and 25,000 acres of western sage grouse habitat.

Protective exclosure fences on the Little Malheur River and Canyon Creek were maintained to ensure their effectiveness in protecting riparian resources.

Willow Creek 1986, Brogan Allotment.

There were 28 field surveys conducted prior to project work and 25 additional projects reviewed prior to project construction. There were two separate locations of Mulford's milk-vetch, and also one location each of Malheur forget-me-not, Owyhee clover (*Trifolim owyheense*), and smooth blazing star. The projects at these five locations are being mitigated accordingly. Rehabilitation was implemented on Vines Hill where numerous Malheur forget-me-not plants had been destroyed on a right-of-way site in 1990. All known plant sitings were entered on a data base system for the Vale District and maps were likewise updated.

Willow Creek 1989, Brogan Allotment.

Malheur Resource Area made considerable progress in automating wildlife information, greatly facilitating access to resource data when responding to actions proposed on federal lands. New data was shared with the Oregon Natural Heritage organization.

Jenny Barnett, a cooperative education student from Oregon State University, was employed and received training in the resource area specific to the BLM organizational functions. This student played a major role in compiling information about the distribution and abundance of western sage grouse in both Baker and Malheur counties.

Inventory for Packard's blazing star (*Mentzelia packardiae*), which is a federal candidate species for threatened/endangered listing, was conducted in Leslie Gulch. New sitings were noted for two other federal candidate species: Mulford's milk-vetch (*Astragalus mulfordiae*) and Malheur forget-me-not (*Hackelia cronquistii*). The habitat management plan for Malheur forget-me-not was monitored as scheduled. Monitoring was also conducted for three other federal candidate species: Ertter's groundsel/ragwort (*Senecia ertterae*), Mulford's milk-vetch (*Astragalus mulfordiae*), and smooth blazing star (*Mentzelia mollis*). Sites visits to assess threats and population viability were done for four additional federal candidate species: Cusicks' lupine (*Lupinus cusickii*), golden buckwheat (*Eriogonum chrysops*), Harper Valley fiddleneck (*Amsinckia carinata*), and grimy ivesia (*Ivesia rhypara* var. *rhypara*).

Public outreach in the fish/wildlife/botany program included six presentations to local elementary, high school and college level students.

1992 Plans

Project developments to enhance public access for the Lower Owyhee Watchable Wildlife area are expected to be completed during this fiscal year. Spring song bird inventories will also be completed to enhance the information available in this excellent birding area. Canada goose nesting platforms will be installed in the Coyne Place Wildlife HMP area, and wood duck nest boxes will be established on selected reaches of the Owyhee River. Scout groups will be involved in scattering alfalfa and sweet clover seed in selected areas around the settlement of Harper to enhance the availability of high quality herbaceous forage.

Inventories and monitoring will again be conducted in habitat that is known breeding range for special status species including long-billed curlews and western sage grouse.

Fish and wildlife staff will provide considerable support to planning related to geothermal and gold mining development, and also for management plans for the proposed wild and scenic river designation on the North Fork of the Malheur River and the Leslie Gulch Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

The Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for Malheur forget-me-not will be monitored as scheduled. Monitoring will also be continued for four additional species. Inventory will be conducted in the Leslie Gulch/Honeycombs area for Owyhee clover (*Trifolium owhyeense*). All projects will be reviewed prior to any construction and field surveys made as necessary. The rehabilitation site for Malheur forget-me-not will be monitored and additional rehabilitation performed if needed.

Lands and Rights-of-Way Program

1991 Accomplishments

In 1991, the following 14 rights-of-way were issued:

* BLM - Four R/Ws for Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS) located at Vines Hill, Kelsey Butte, Red Butte and Owyhee Ridge.
* BLM - Public parking area and boat ramp along an area of the Snake River known as the Oasis.
* Nyssa Road District - Stock piling of gravel for road maintenance.
* Oregon-Idaho Utilities - An underground fibre optic line.
* Idaho Power - Three R/Ws to amend the width of rights-of-way.
* One R/W to resolve a trespass.
* One R/W for a powerline to provide electrical power to a pump station supplying water to the Oregon State Prison in Ontario.
* Lockett - An assignment.
* Malheur Bell - Resolve a trespass.

Seven land use permits were issued, six of which were agricultural permits. The other was to the Highway Department for emergency maintenance of culverts.

The management plan for the Dry Peak (Cottonwood Mountain) Communication Site is completed and will be released for public review when the engineering site map is available.

Four cases of unauthorized use were resolved: one by collecting back rental and issuing an agricultural permit, two by issuing rights-of-way, and one by closing the case file (BLM fire crew removed old tower and debris) after investigation and field exam failed to identify the individual trespasser.

1992 Plans

Work will continue in 1992, with right-of-way processing for utility lines, resolution of agricultural trespasses, processing of short-term agricultural permits and renewal authorizations.

An on-the-ground cultural survey has been completed for the Oregon Trail Farms land exchange which would benefit the habitat of a special status plant, an important stop on the Oregon Trail, and Alkali Springs. Work will continue in 1992 to process this exchange.

Minerals Program

1991 Accomplishments

The level of exploration activity for locatable minerals remained high in 1991. There were 36 notices processed, which is up from 29 the previous year. Gold remained the primary target of the exploration activity, with the industrial minerals bentonite, zeolite, and diatomite also getting some attention. A few prospectors were also looking for geodes and picture jasper. Of the 108 compliance inspections of mining activity that were conducted, only one noncompliance action was initiated. Two noncompliance actions from previous years were resolved, and reclamation was completed on 13 exploration projects.

Work continues on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Atlas Precious Metals proposed Grassy Mountain Mine. The draft EIS is scheduled for public release in the spring of 1992, with the final EIS due in the fall.

Production continued at several industrial mineral mines in 1991. Eagle Pitcher produced 200,000 yards of diatomite from its mine located on the boundary of Vale and Burns Districts. Teague Minerals produced 13,000 tons of bentonite and 1,500 tons of zeolite from their mines near Succor Creek.

There were 16 free-use permits issued for gravel in 1991 to satisfy county and road district needs, and one free-use permit was issued to BLM and the Water and Soil Conservation Agency. Five gravel sales were issued to the public.

Four inspections were conducted on gravel pits in the Malheur County Road District (Vale) area and another four

inspections were done in the Ironside area, and all operations were found to comply with regulations.

A Mineral Material trespass was discovered and a trespass notice sent. All charges and damages due to the United States, plus administrative costs, have been paid. Eleven community pits were designated and the pertinent information entered into the district's computer data system for tracking purposes. One area was designated as a common use area for building stone.

1992 Plans

Fewer new gold exploration projects are expected in 1992 due to a trend toward lower gold market values. Exploration projects which remain active will be monitored, and reclamation will be done on the completed projects.

Geothermal exploration activity is expected in the Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA) located immediately southeast of Vale. The KGRA has been selected by the Bonneville Power Administration as one of three pilot project sites in the northwest. Trans-Pacific Geothermal Corporation is expected to submit a notice of intent to drill shallow, temperature gradient wells during the spring of 1992. Further exploration using deeper drill holes would require submission of a plan of operations and the writing of an environmental analysis. The results of the exploration would be used to determine the feasibility for development of a geothermal power plant on the KGRA.

Other Mineral Materials program focus will be on achieving clearances for the eleven community pits. Free use permits and gravel sales will be issued as requested and inspections of gravel pits will continue.

Cultural Resources Program

1991 Accomplishments

Cultural resource surveys were conducted for 65 proposed projects on public lands administered by the Malheur Resource Area. Approximately 400 acres were surveyed for cultural resources. The surveys located several prehistoric lithic scatters. None of the cultural resources identified will be detrimentally impacted by any of BLM's proposed management activities. Two cultural resource sites, a lithic scatter and a portion of the Oregon Trail at Keeney Pass, were further protected by fence projects.

Consultation with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office determined that 19 recorded sites are ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Looting at one of the ineligible sites was considered to be a violation of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and prompted an investigation.

Several accomplishments of a cultural resource nature specific to the Oregon Trail are described in the feature article "Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial."

1992 Plans

Much of the work planned for 1992 focuses on Oregon Trail interpretation in preparation for the sesquicentennial (150th) celebration of the Oregon Trail in 1993. At Keeney Pass, six new interpretive panels will be developed to replace outdated or inaccurate panels. The two interpretive panels designed in 1991 will be fabricated and installed. The first phase of the native revegetation plan will be implemented with the help of volunteers.

The interpretive panel at Alkali Spring will be completed and installed. Access improvement, to be done in cooperation with Malheur County, will involve removing fence gates and installing cattleguards at five locations along this stretch of the Oregon Trail.

Work is scheduled to begin in 1992 on the interpretive panel and a vehicle parking area for the Oregon Trail interpretive site near Birch Creek.

Wilderness Program

1991 Accomplishments

Wilderness Study Reports (WSR) were completed for the 15 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in the Malheur Resource Area. These reports were included in a statewide BLM Wilderness Study Report package forwarded to the President in October to present BLM's formal recommendations for wilderness designation. The report recommended wilderness designation of 117,110 acres within nine WSAs, with the other 155,390 acres being recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The President's recommendations must be forwarded to Congress within two years.

Ongoing efforts were conducted for interim management of all designated WSAs, including surveillance and compliance field checks throughout the field season in all WSAs. Over 100 contacts were made during the second annual hunter patrol associated with the WSAs.

During 1991, one grandfathered mining operation continued in the Blue Canyon WSA. Substantial progress was made with reclamation activities on one claim block in the Dry Creek Buttes WSA to comply with wilderness nonimpairment requirements.

Wilderness Program, Castle Rock WSA #3-18.

1992 Plans

Emphasis will continue with interim management, including field surveillance and compliance monitoring, of the 15 WSAs in the resource area. Any projects proposed in the WSAs would be evaluated to determine consistency with the BLM's Interim Management Policy (IMP) and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review. Ongoing efforts to meet wilderness nonimpairment and/or reclamation requirements for three existing projects within WSAs will continue. Hunter patrols will be conducted for a third year if adequate funding is available.

Recreation Program

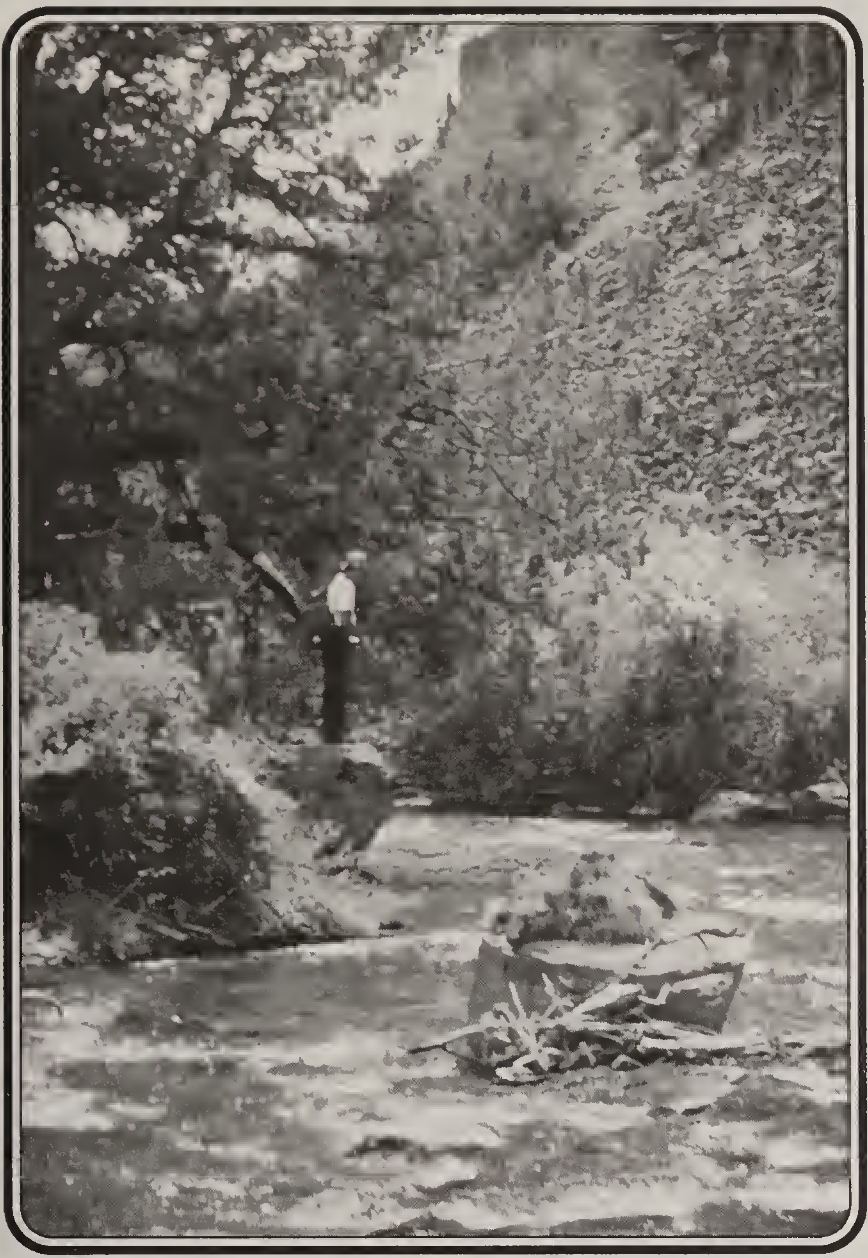
1991 Accomplishments

The Vale District's 1991 Recreation 2000 Showcase project focused on the improvements done at Keeney Pass Interpretive Site on the National Historic Oregon Trail. One accomplishment was completion of an interpretive brochure. Another accomplishment was a control burn in part of the area which was prescribed to prepare a favorable seedbed for the replanting of native shrubs, flowering perennials and grasses. Other improvements or projects are summarized in the feature article "Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial."

Leslie Gulch and the Lower Owyhee River (below the Owyhee Dam) were nominated and designated as components of Oregon BLM's new Watchable Wildlife program, and a development plan for the Lower Owyhee River site was initiated.

A cooperative agreement was signed and planning hikes conducted with the Desert Trail Association involving 74 miles of the proposed Desert Trail. The nonmotorized recreation trail will be managed as a corridor with nominal trail tread development. The trail segment through Malheur Resource Area will supplement those segments presently developed in Burns District, and in Nevada and California.

Maintenance was done at four developed recreation sites—Chukar Park, Twin Springs, Keeney Pass and Leslie Gulch. Maintenance was also started at a fifth area, the Oasis launch site on Brownlee Reservoir, after a right-of-way held by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife was relinquished to the BLM. Volunteers helped maintain our undeveloped but popular Snively Hot Springs site.



North Fork of the Malheur River.

1992 Plans

Facilities and grounds maintenance will be performed at the recreation sites. A site plan for development of Snively Hot Springs will be completed, and a vault toilet and some protective roadside barriers placed at the site.

Preparations for the 1993 national sesquicentennial celebration of the Oregon National Historic Trail include development of the Alkali Springs and Birch Creek interpretive sites. The new interpretive signs for Keeney Pass and the Leslie Gulch-Succor Creek National Back Country Byway will also be fabricated and installed.

Other 1992 projects include development of the Lower Owyhee River Watchable Wildlife interpretive site and viewing area, and continuation of the work on the Desert Trail with the Desert Trail Association.

Another project to be initiated is the study of the North Fork Malheur River to determine its eligibility for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. The first step involves preparation of a resource assessment document to identify existing resource values associated with the river segment between Beulah Reservoir north to the Malheur National Forest administrative boundary.

Noxious Weed Control Program

1991 Plans

A districtwide five-year integrated Weed Control Plan and EA was completed and implemented in 1991. This plan addresses all measures of control available to BLM (including chemicals) and requires a Pesticide Use Permit (PUP) for any herbicide use. There are 21 sites identified for noxious weed control in the Malheur Resource Area.

1992 Plans

Treatment on the 21 existing sites, along with two new additional sites, will be coordinated and monitored.

Mediterranean sage, which has been located on the road near Riverside, will be treated in 1992. The area weed coordinator will hand hoe this site to control future spreading. A seeding is proposed in fiscal year 1992 or 1993 in the Freezeout Allotment to eliminate further spreading of Halogeton.

Fire Management

1991 Accomplishments

Malheur Resource Area completed its portion of the Vale District Fire Management Activity Plan. As in the past, fire suppression relied upon seasonal BLM fire fighters and an interagency agreement. The 1991 fire season for the Malheur Resource Area involved 13 fires which was less than normal for the area.

Late rains were beneficial in postponing vegetative drying until late July or mid-August, at which time the cooler days and good humidity recovery effectively curbed the fire potential in the Malheur Resource area.

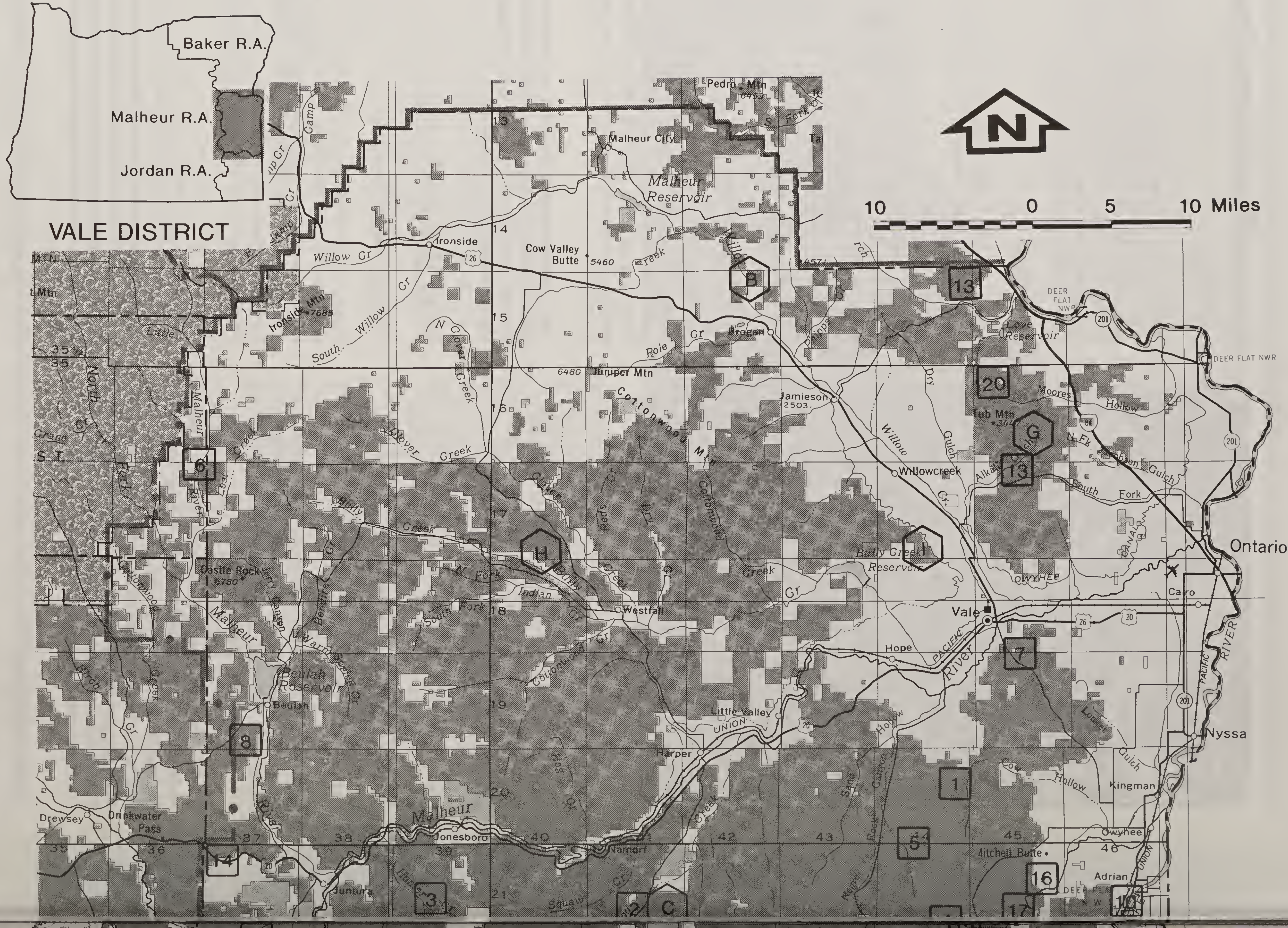
Wild Horse Program

1991 Accomplishments

Malheur Resource Area has three wild horse herd management areas (HMA): Cold Springs, Three Fingers, and Hog Creek. In late February, over a two-day period, 78 horses were gathered from the Three Fingers HMA and taken to Burns for adoption in the Adopt-a-Horse Program. The nine horses not adopted were returned to the Three Fingers herd area.

1992 Plans

Horse gathering in the Hog Creek HMA, which wasn't done in 1991 due to lack of funds, is now scheduled for 1992. This should bring horse numbers within the range-carrying capacity and remove horses that have strayed outside the HMA.



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Malheur Reservoir
Cow Valley Butte 5460
Pedro Mtn 6453
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Willowcreek
Juniper Mtn
Cottonwood Mtn
Tub Mtn
Cove Reservoir
Deer Flat NWR
Bully Creek Reservoir
Westfall
Hope
Caro
Little Valley
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Castle Rock 6780
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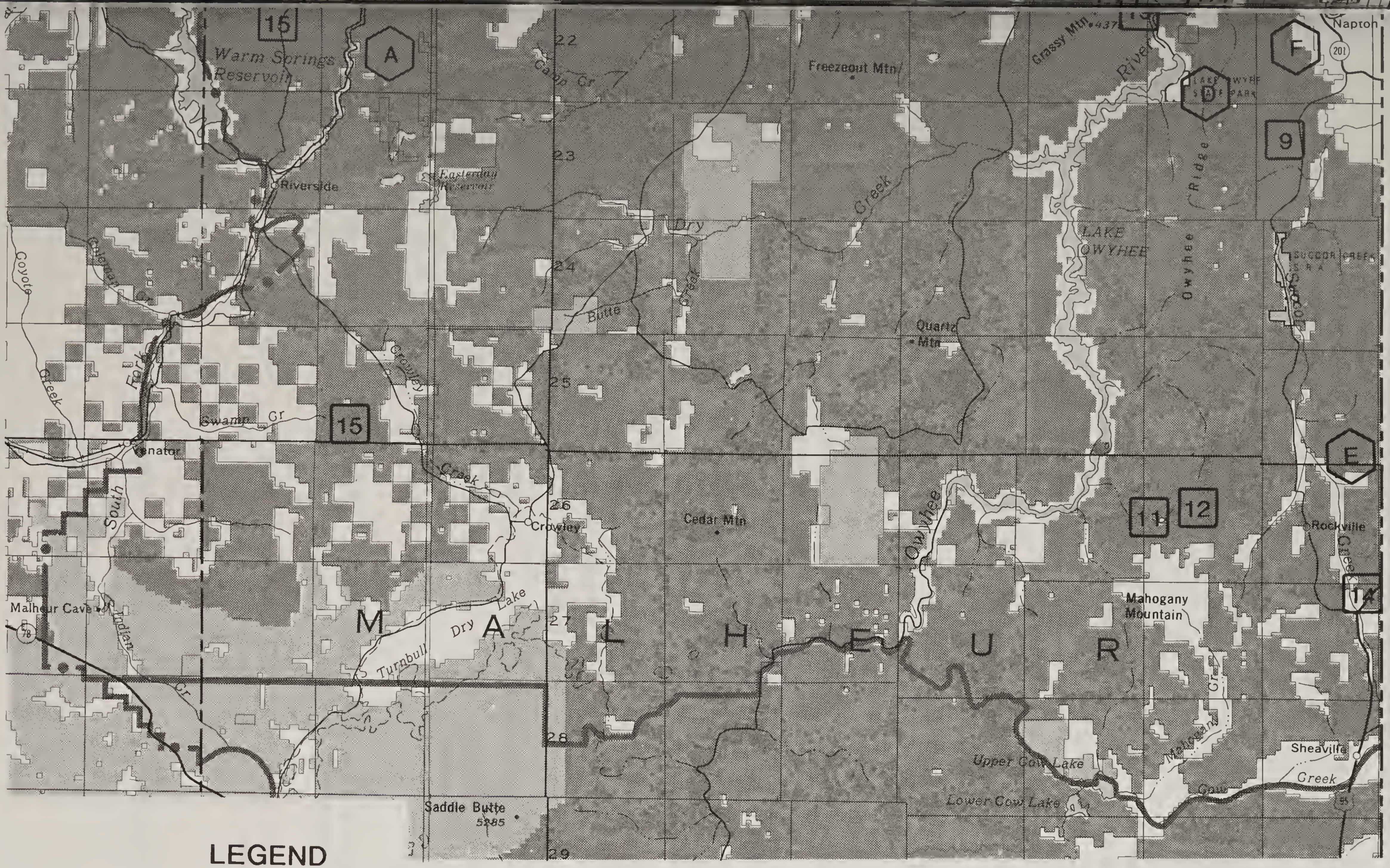

LEGEND

- District Boundary
- Planning Area Boundary
- BLM Land
- USFS Land
- State Land
- Private Land
- Environmental Assessment or Area

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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VALE DISTRICT

Malheur Resource Area

1992

Environmental Assessment Register

An environmental analysis of potential effects is required, according to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for any on-the-ground actions before approval is given to proceed with such actions. NEPA also requires that the analyses be open to the public.

During FY 1992, the Malheur Resource Area will analyze several on-the-ground actions projected to occur during the year or in future years. A register of the environmental assessments (EAs) anticipated for completion in FY 1992 is provided in Table 1 to facilitate public participation in this analysis process.

If you would like to receive any of the listed EAs, please notify the District Planning & Environmental Coordinator in writing at the Vale District Office. For proper identification of the EAs, indicate both the Area Register Number and the Project Name when making your request.

Project No.	Project Name	Proposed Action	Project Location	Affected Special Area	Est. EA Complete Date	Est. FONSI Decision Date
1	Chalk Butte Fence	Construction of 0.7 mile of barbed wire fence	T.20 S., R.45 E., Sec.15	None	Spring 1992	Spring 1992
2	Harper Allotment Management Plan (AMP)	Implementation of an AMP	T.21, 22, 23 S., R.40 and 41E.	Wilderness Study Areas	Spring 1992	Spring 1992
3	Hunter Creek Riparian Fence Three Reservoirs	Construction of 2.5 miles of barbed wire fence	T.21 S., R.39 E., Sec.27, 28	None	Fall 1992	Fall 1992
4	Rock Creek Fence Extension	Construction of 0.5 mile of barbed wire fence	T.21. S., R.45 E., Sec.25	None	Spring 1992	Spring 1992
5	DM Reservoir Exclosure	Construction of Exclosure to exclude livestock	T.20 S., R.44 W., Sec.27	None	Fall 1992	Fall 1992
6	Little Malheur Cattleguards	Installation of two cattleguards	T.17 S., R.36 E., Sec.1	None	Summer 1992	Summer 1992
7	Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA) Geothermal Exploration Plan	Exploration Drilling for Geothermal Resources	T.18 and 19S., R. 45E.	KGRA	Fall 1992	Fall 1992
8	McClellan Fence	Construction of 0.5 mile of barbed wire fence	T.20 S., R.37 E., Sec.4	None	Summer 1992	Summer 1992
9	Teague AF, GB Pits Plan of Operations	Bentonite Open Pit Development	T.23 S., R.46E., Sec.29 T. 23S., R46E., Sec.17	None	Summer 1992	Summer 1992
10	Teague Mill Plan of Operations	Operation of Mill Site	T.21 S., R.46E., Sec.27	None	Summer 1992	Summer 1992

Project No.	Project Name	Proposed Action	Project Location	Affected Special Area	Est. EA Complete Date	Est. FONSI Decision Date
11	Leslie Gulch Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Management Plan	Management Plan for Leslie Gulch ACEC	T.26 S., R.45E.	ACEC	Summer 1992	Summer 1992
12	Succor Creek-Leslie Gulch Back Country Byway Signs	Installation of interpretative signs	T.26S., R.45E., Sec.9	Leslie Gulch ACEC, Byway	Summer 1992	Summer 1992
13	Oregon Trail Interpretive Sites	Construction of two interpretive sites on the Oregon Trail	T.17S., R.45E., Sec.8 T.15S.,R45E.,Sec.16	Oregon Trail	Summer 1992	Summer 1992
14	District Portal Signs	Installation of two Portal Signs	T.21S.,R37E.,Sec.6 T.26S.,R46E.,Sec.36	None	Summer 1992	Summer 1992
15	Desert Trail	Establishment of nonmotorized trail	Oregon Highway 78 to Highway 20 segment	None	Summer 1992	Summer 1992
16	Lower Owyhee River Watchable Wildlife Interpretive Site	Construction of interpretive site	T.21S.,R.45E.,Sec.23	None	Summer 1992	Summer 1992
17	Snively Hot Springs Restrooms	Installation of restrooms	T.21.S.,R.45E.,Sec. 22	Recreation Site	Summer 1992	Summer 1992
18	Special Recreation Permits	Recreation permits for various activities, i.e., guiding, rock hounding, horse endurance events	Various	Will depend on site	Various	Various
19	Kern Basin Cattleguard	Installation of a cattleguard	T.22S.,R.44E.,Sec.11	None	Summer 1992	Summer 1992
20	Oregon Trail Cattleguards	Installation of 6 cattleguards	Various	Oregon Trail	Summer 1992	Summer 1992

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